

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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### BY RIGHT OF SUCCESSION.

By ESMÉ STUART.

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#### CHAPTER XLII. REJECTED.

MRS. GORDON had taken special pains to collect all the books and private possessions of Grace and Sibyl, and to lock them away in trunks up in an attic. Some day she meant to send them these things; but, of course, they would be no good to them at a German school. However, when one day she received a letter from Fräulein Storme, saying her charges had grievously disappointed her, and had gone off on their own account to earn their living, she was rather puzzled as to what she should do with these small possessions. Also she was very much annoyed at the ingratitude of these unfortunate children, who thus refused her benefits. She took counsel with Frances, who comforted her by saying that she had worried herself quite enough about girls who were nothing to her, and that it was a good riddance of the responsibility.

"I do hope, Frances, they will not come across dear Austin," she said, one day. "Of course it is very unlikely, and he has not once mentioned knowing any English people. Still——"

But Frances laughed away the fear.

"Why, mother, Austin is the last person in the world to fall in love with a girl of no position. He is so very particular about ladies."

"So he is; but I told you, dear, that these poor things were by no means vulgar."

"I dare say not, but that sort of thing is always in the blood."

"But what shall I do about all their belongings? Of course they have no right to any of them, but still I wish to act generously, and would not for the world be troubled with their books and other things."

"Oh, some day we can pack off the boxes to Germany. Do you know their address?"

"Oh, no. Of course, if they reject my money and behave so ungratefully, I shall have nothing more to do with them."

"We can send the things to Fräulein Storme. I suppose she knows or can find out where they are."

Mrs. Gordon felt that Frances was very sensible, especially as her advice agreed with her own opinion. She meant to wash her hands of them, but nevertheless she felt somewhat like the governor of a jail from whose care two prisoners have escaped. She was quite ignorant that they had taken the name of Evans; no one had told her such an unimportant fact, and she had always mentioned them as "those poor girls." This ignorance made her doubly anxious about the possibility of Austin's meeting them and finding out their story. There was no knowing what he might do or say if this took place; he might insist on his mother making them a liberal allowance or start some other foolish, quixotic plan. So Mrs. Gordon's secret was the source of a great deal of unpleasant reflection for her, and the root of it lay in the fear of parting with any of her long-awaited-for inheritance. It was only occasionally, however, that these ideas troubled her, for she had so many other agreeable thoughts to occupy her that the

few disagreeables were easily driven out of her mind. Still there it was—just the one drop of gall in the great bowl of nectar.

How delightful she found it to invite some of the Longham people to stay with her, with what courteous ease she exhibited her possessions, and with what unostentatious kindness she arranged for the amusement of her visitors! They were to drive in her carriages, the better to see the beautiful neighbourhood, and the better perhaps to envy her. The envy of friends is, to some natures, especially sweet indeed; it seems to constitute the greater portion of their enjoyment. And those little sentences of "How fortunate you are! How I envy you your charming house and garden! Your horses are so thoroughbred, how fortunate you were to secure them!" All these remarks make the things envied doubly precious to them, so that an unenvied possession becomes almost worthless. But riches do not really alter character. Ellen Gordon had always been self-seeking, selfish, and careless of all but herself and her own children; and now that the pressure of poverty was taken off, she was the same. It has been said that the true result of riches is not to increase ease and pleasure, the common idea, but to increase care and trouble, and Mrs. Gordon had already begun to experience these difficulties. Had she been a really bad woman, she might have chased away effectually all thoughts of those helpless girls, but she had a great wish to stand well with Heaven as well as with the world. She might argue out well enough that she had done all she could; but there would come the thought—how would she have acted had they been her own children? She had never asked or enquired about the particulars of their departure, and for that reason Fancy again and again pictured the scene to her. It was as if some invisible painter's hand were constantly drawing the picture for her to look at, then wiping it away, and beginning it over again. What torments the mind makes for itself. "Truth will rise up to the surface sooner or later, though for a time kept down in the water," and this truth was that Mrs. Gordon had acted unkindly, almost treacherously, to James Gordon's children—his children, whether he liked it or not, or whether the world acknowledged them or not.

Such was Mrs. Gordon's state of mind, when one morning she received a note in an unknown hand. It was from Sidney Jones.

"DEAR MRS. GORDON,—Fearing you may have seen my father's carriage accident in the papers, I write a line to tell you that I was telegraphed for home, but that I find my father going on satisfactorily. I cannot say how long I may have to stay with him. Your son was good enough to say he would await the turn of events at Unterberg, and, if possible, I should go back there and start off on a Swiss tour with him, which this accident has hindered. Being sure he would like you to know this, I wrote a line on my arrival, though you will, of course, hear from himself soon. He has several friends in the house we were lodging in, and gets on well with the old Professor, so I hope it will not be too dull for him.—Yours sincerely,

"SIDNEY JONES."

There was a general outcry from Austin's sisters and mother.

"What a shame to leave poor Austin out there all alone!" said Minnie.

"Couldn't he come home and see this place now?" asked Frances.

"I should like him to know Colin," added Beatrice, happily, not noticing the long face Minnie pulled at this remark.

"Really, I don't see why Austin should await Mr. Jones's pleasure," said Mrs. Gordon. It was doubly sweet to be proud when one could back it up with a banker's balance. "I hope they will pay him liberally for all this trouble; besides, it is not good for a man to be left in a little German town with nothing to do."

"Oh, mother, Austin is not like other young men; he could be trusted anywhere."

"My dear Beatrice, what can you know about the temptation of young men in foreign towns?" replied her mother.

"No, of course I don't," replied Beatrice, blushing; "but, of course, Austin wouldn't drink or gamble."

"He might fall in love," remarked Minnie, smiling and thinking that the Great Bear had made his meaning plainer yesterday than ever before. Should she accept him? Only his father might not make him a very handsome allowance at first, and she did not mean to live with that queer old woman, his mother.

"Fall in love!" replied Frances, indignantly; "Austin is much too sensible to fall in love with a German girl, common, badly dressed people."

"But there may be English girls there," suggested Beatrice, who rather liked the idea of her brother falling in love,

she found that state of existence so very pleasant herself. She was not prepared for the indignant reply of her mother.

"Really, Beatrice, you do say such foolish things sometimes. How very unlikely it is that there would be suitable English families living out there."

"But, mother," said Minnie, "don't you remember old Mrs. Johnson talking about Unterberg, and some girls she knew who were gone to finish their education at some German school there? I forget the name."

"I can't think what that has to do with Austin," said Mrs. Gordon, rising. "Anyhow, I shall write to him to-day, and tell him that I particularly wish him to come home for a holiday; it will be just as easy to start again with young Jones from England."

Mrs. Gordon had not really intended doing this till the conversation had taken this turn; then all at once her fears started up again. What if in his idle moments he should make acquaintance with those girls? Why had nature made them so pretty?

That very morning she wrote off to her "dear boy," telling him that she wanted his help to see after the new property, and that for many reasons he had better come back at once; she should expect him in a week.

This letter eased her mind considerably, at all events. When he was at home she would easily find out if he did or did not know those girls, and here he would be quite safe from the possibility of meeting them.

Under the new reign at the Warren, the Miss Gordons had each a room of their own. Beatrice was delighted at this state of things; she could write to Colin at her ease, and this morning she did so, telling him the joyful news that Austin was returning home, and that he must come and see him. Then she took up a volume of the History of the Conquest of India, which she had found in the library downstairs, and, having finished it, started down to find the next volume. The library at the Warren was a large, dull-looking place. The books James Gordon had inherited from his father had been put up on shelves, but seldom opened. Beatrice was the only one of the present Gordons who took the least interest in the big, dull room filled with dry volumes. For Colin's sake she was trying to become a little less stupid. To-day, as she took down the second volume, she espied be-

tween the volumes, as if it had been squeezed in by mistake, a little volume bound in red, looking very unlike a library book. Beatrice took it out and tried to smooth out the cover, which was slightly crumpled. Next she opened it and saw it was entitled "The Basket of Flowers"; but on the title page she read these words: "Sibyl Gordon, with Nan's love, on her tenth birthday, 18—."

"Sibyl Gordon," repeated Beatrice "What a pretty name, and how odd she was just my age; I was ten years old that year. It must have been some relation of James Gordon. Well, I am glad children were here once; but who was Nan, I wonder? I must ask mother some day." So thinking, she replaced the book and hurried upstairs with her volume; but every now and then she again thought, "Who is Sibyl Gordon, who is just my age? She must be some kind of cousin to us, and yet I never heard of her." Before she met her mother again she had forgotten the episode, and when she next recalled it she was afraid to ask, for Mrs. Gordon always refused to talk at all about the James Gordon into whose shoes they had slipped. However, Beatrice kept the name in remembrance, and meant to tell Colin about it when next she saw him.

The letter which had been so easily written by Mrs. Gordon was received by Austin with consternation. He was living in a sort of dream, counting the minutes when there was the least chance of seeing Grace, and occupying his leisure in buying fruit and ice, anything that gave him an excuse to knock at Frau Hanson's door, and to have a chance of seeing Grace come from the sick-chamber to thank him. But every day she was less bright, and looked paler and less hopeful, for now she considered him as a real friend, and therefore did not try to hide her feelings.

Once he had said:

"I think, Miss Evans, you should take more care of yourself; you have not been for a walk since I saw you in the gardens."

"Sibyl does not much like me to leave her, she is so miserable. I believe, if she could feel happier, she would get better. This German doctor cannot understand."

Austin suggested to the Professorin to take Grace's place for one evening, and to let her walk out with Frau Hanson, and as every one agreed to the proposition, Grace never knew who had hatched the plot, and so, for fear of hurting some one's

feelings, she accompanied Gretchen and her mother to the distant gardens, where the band played and where Austin had first introduced himself to them. It seemed very strange to Grace to find him there again. Indeed, Austin had managed to secure some chairs.

It was a warm, pleasant evening. The German aristocratic world enjoyed itself, and was rendered lively by the sprinkling of military uniforms, which, unlike Englishmen, the German officers are not ashamed of exhibiting. Austin, however, in his unartistic civilian black, looked every inch a gentleman, chiefly because there was no pretence about him. His fair, curly hair still looked almost boyish, his eyes were grave, but his mouth had no hard lines; indeed, it was almost too sensitive. Grace had really almost learnt to look upon him as a brother, and now sat down next to him with a quiet smile.

"I am glad to see you here, Mr. Gordon. I wonder why the very sight of one's countrymen gives one such pleasure when one is abroad?"

"Does that mean, Miss Evans, that at home you would pass me unnoticed in the crowd?"

Grace laughed, and Frau Hanson said in German:

"We only want Fräulein Sibyl to make up our party. Gretchen is getting so English that I shall soon begin to learn it myself. Look there, Gretchen, is that Tante Anna on the other side of the garden?"

"Yes, and Cousin Albert. Come, then, mother, and speak to them."

"Will you wait here for us and keep our chairs, Fräulein? I shall not be long. Ah! by the way, the Professorin told me to give you this letter, which came as I was coming out, Herr Gordon. I had almost forgotten it."

The good lady drew out Mrs. Gordon's letter, handed it to Austin, and then hastened to join Tante Anna. Austin was only too delighted to be left alone with Grace. In the crowd they were so much alone, and he felt quite at his ease, for there could be no harm in speaking to her as much as he liked here. He could even look at her without her being conscious of the fact; he knew the outline by heart, but when a man is longing to say, oh, so much, the knowledge of his love's profile is not very satisfying.

It was Grace who looked round suddenly, saying:

"Please do not mind me. Read your

letter, Mr. Gordon; an English letter is so very, very pleasant to receive, isn't it?"

This was a bad prophecy as regarded the letter Austin now held in his hand. He bit his lip as he read the imperative command to return home. It seemed to him as if his mother must know the state of the case, and that she withheld her consent to Austin's love-making. And yet with this express command Austin knew that he must accede. He would not give the right reason, so he had none to give; he could not say that he was desperately in love with a girl about whom he knew nothing but her name and the light of her sweet face; he could not telegraph that if Grace Evans would have him he would marry her in a week, and risk his mother's anger. No, he was too good a son to do that; and yet, now that there was no more time to look forward to, Austin felt that he could not go without telling Grace what he had told her already a thousand times in his heart.

Grace had all this time averted her head so as to leave Austin free to read his letter at his ease. Only when she heard him fold up the paper did she again look round.

"I hope you have good news."

"No, not very good news. My mother is anxious for my return, as Mr. Jones no longer obliges me to be abroad. It is only for a time, of course; I mean to return with him. He says that his father is better, but that he is very glad of his presence."

Grace suddenly felt a pang of sorrow at this news. She had not thought before of losing her friend. If he went she would become still more lonely; but she found the power to say, with a smile:

"I am glad you are going back to your home, though I shall——" She stopped suddenly, thinking she had no right to say she should miss him. He rose suddenly.

"Miss Evans, will you walk round that quiet path? I want to——"

"Oh, certainly. I see Frau Hanson is still talking. We shall come back to her here."

She followed Austin, who walked quietly towards a path which was bordered on each side by a thick hedge of acacia; but at this moment, as it was out of sight of the band, not a creature was walking in it.

"We shall not hear the band," said Grace, suddenly pausing, when she found herself alone with Austin, and beginning to retrace her steps; but to her surprise Austin gently took her hand.



"Will you sit down here a minute, Miss Evans? Just this once, as I am going."

Only then did Grace feel all the colour rushing to her cheeks. Only then did a sudden flash of knowledge come over her. The friend who had helped her, whom she had trusted with that secret of poor Sibyl's, who had always been so courteous, so gentlemanly, he meant—what?

She sat down on the seat to which he had led her, and then she covered her face with her hands, saying, faintly:

"Don't, please."

"But you don't know what I want to tell you, and now I must say it. I have waited to tell you, for fear you should think me hasty or heartless; but now it is all changed. Miss Evans, please do not cover your face. I must look at you. I must see you say that I may love you. I must love you, whether you can say yes or no; but if only you would give me leave to say it! I have nothing to offer you but my love and my future, which shall be devoted to you if you will be my wife. Grace, look at me. I cannot say it more plainly—I love you with all the strength of my whole being."

He had said all this in a quick, hurried manner. No one knowing Austin in his ordinary character could have guessed that this was the same man, as he bent a little towards the girl now hiding her face from him.

He repeated it again: "Grace, I love you," and then he touched her hand—that hand nearest to him which would hide her dear face. That touch was enough to bring her hand on her lap, and he took it and clasped it with such a firm, true grasp, that afterwards Grace remembered it had hurt her a little, though now she felt nothing but that for a few moments her hand was in his. This was the only union that might ever be theirs, and the passive way in which she let him hold it for those few instants was the only return she could ever make him. It might be wrong, but it seemed such happiness—the only intense happiness which, through all her life, she would ever look back upon.

If Grace fancied she was sinning, it was but for a few seconds. She was too true to act long against her conscience; but that first great flow of love in a young heart is the sweetest of life's pleasures; all the sweeter because, though so great, it is yet hedged in with the reticence of a pure, unsullied soul. It loves, and at the same time it has the courage to crush all that it

believes to be wrong in its love. So first love is the most beautiful hour of every life; whether it be the first love that lasts, or the first that perishes, both are alike lovely.

"Mr. Gordon, you must not hold my hand. You must not say that to me. Why did you do it?" said Grace, very gently.

"Why? How could I help it? Grace, you are the first and only woman I have ever loved, and I think you can believe me, this is no mere form of words. I know you have never thought of me in that way or given me any thought but as your friend. Even that has been very precious to me, but I want more, a great deal more, Grace. I want you for eternity, and that will seem all too short, my darling."

These words frightened Grace; they even gave her courage to speak, which before she seemed almost powerless to do. There are few women who can bear to look at the depths of a true man's love. As wine to water; as a summer breeze to a hurricane, so is the difference between a man's love and a woman's. There may be exceptions; but in that case the woman's nature appears to suffer from it. It loses much of its charm, and makes one tremble for the consequences. Nothing is more beautiful than a woman's deep, true, enduring love; but those who will compare it with the man's passion err greatly. They only succeed in taking the sweetness out of the strength, and the strength out of the sweetness.

"Mr. Gordon, forgive me; I should not have let you speak thus. If you really love me, you will not do it, because I can never, never be your wife. You cannot understand. You know nothing of me but what you have seen; and at this time especially, if for no other reason, I should never dream of my own happiness; but it is not that only. Were Sibyl to be quite restored to health to-day, I should say the same to you, and for your own sake, I should say no—oh, yes, a thousand times no."

"For my own sake! I must judge of that. Good heavens, Grace! you cannot be so cruel as to say that?"

Grace cruel! It was an accusation hard to bear; but she would bear it and much more for his sake, because—ah, well, what mattered saying it to herself?—because she loved him. She could feel the touch of his hand. Grace could have

kissed that firm, gentle hand which had done so many kind things for her and Sibyl, but only as a slave might kiss that of his master, nothing more.

"No, you cannot judge, Mr. Gordon. I don't know why we should have come across your path. But what would your mother say or your sisters, if they knew?"

"If they knew what? That I can love but one woman in the world?"

"Don't say that. You must love some one else. I could bring nothing but trouble to any one that cared for me. Come back to Frau Hanson; please come back, and forget it all. Perhaps you will still think of me as your friend. You have been so kind to us—oh, so kind."

"No, I cannot," he said, quietly, but rising as Grace bade him. "I am afraid that I have been rash and that I have frightened you, Grace; but, indeed, I feel that I cannot go back to England without your word that you will be mine some day. You cannot deceive any one. I have heard that women say no when they mean yes; but you are not like most."

Grace stopped in the narrow path so well guarded from listeners. After all, she had not made Mr. Gordon understand her meaning.

"What can I say, Mr. Gordon, to make you believe me? How do women act in such cases? If only I knew; but I am so ignorant."

She clasped her hands, and the face that looked up at Austin was so innocent, so pleading, that he longed to put his arm round her and lay the sad head on his breast. Then she must be happy, when he was guarding her from every ill. She must love him if he gave her all his heart—if he kept nothing from her—if he enshrined her in his very soul, away from all breath of trouble, then she must love him.

"Don't think how others act, Grace; we are ourselves, not others. Perhaps if I had spoken weeks ago I could have won your love by degrees; but now that I am going to leave you I haven't time to choose my words. If I tell you very stumbly the truth you must forgive me, because it is the truth; you cannot have a reason for saying no, unless you love another."

"Oh, no. I do not love any one else," said Grace, quickly. "I shall never love any one else—or marry any one—because—"

"Because what? Don't trifle with me now."

"Because you are so good, so noble, and because—I love you."

Austin almost laughed.

"Is that a reason?"

He tried to take her hand and pass it into his arm; but Grace was prepared now. She was quite strong now that he knew all but the one thing he must never know.

"Yes, the best of reasons. Your wife must be like yourself, good, and great, and— Oh, Mr. Gordon, you will make me say it, your wife must not bear a disgraced name—"

Her face was scarlet; her hand trembled visibly. She could hardly stand, and yet she hurried forward till they were once more among the crowd. Here it was safe. He could not give her here the pain of feeling his touch which seemed to send a thrill all through her.

"Disgraced, what do you mean? Nothing will make me believe that word applies to you. As to any one else, what do I care if—"

Frau Hanson had now seen them, and was coming quickly towards them with Gretchen and her aunt and cousin. One minute more, they would be parted.

"But I care, Mr. Gordon. No one shall say—"

What that was, Austin was not to know; and Gretchen little knew what she interrupted as she ran towards them crying out:

"Come, Fräulein Evans, and speak to my Tante Anna. She comes from Basle, and she is so kind to me; but Albert is very mischievous; he pinched me because I would not give him a thaler. Oh, Herr Gordon, where have you been? I looked round just now for you."

Austin pretended not to hear; but Grace found words to answer:

"Round the acacia alley."

"That is pretty. Did you notice the flowers on the trees?"

Then came Tante Anna, a homely lady with plenty to say; and Austin, more cowardly and more at liberty than Grace, made his escape, and she talked on, or, rather, answered questions, all the time feeling her hand in Austin's, his words of deep love sounding in her ears, his hasty reproaches wounding her heart. She must go after him and say:

"I have no home, no father in the eyes of the law, nothing but myself; but I love you, if that is enough."

But then came other thoughts, prouder and more self-contained.

"No, I will not be a disgrace to him, nor be the cause of his mother's reproaches. She must be good and proud of him. It would be a sad grief to her if he loved one who was unworthy of him."

Grace was not the first woman who had stifled her love because the love was true and grand.

### A PHILOSOPHER OF MELANCHOLY.

MELANCHOLY is generally acknowledged to be a national malady. We are supposed to suffer from "le spleen" more than any other people, and to be afflicted with a natural tendency to be bored, inasmuch that we take even our pleasures sadly. Under these circumstances it is fortunate that we possess among our British classics a learned and most exhaustive treatise upon the disease of melancholia in all its branches, with the various remedies for the same. It could scarcely be expected, even by the most sanguine of readers, that such a book upon such a subject should be amusing; yet, perhaps, a quaint or more humorous work has never been written.

Dr. Johnson tells us that it was the only book which ever got him out of bed two hours earlier than usual; and from a man of the doctor's well-known habits this is no small testimony. So popular was the book when it first appeared, that it is said to have brought the publisher "a good estate." We hear nothing of what it brought the author.

Robert Burton, alias Democritus Junior, who undertook to diagnose this national disease and prescribe for the patients, was born at Lindley, in Leicestershire, on the eighth of February, 1576. In 1599 he was elected a student of Christchurch, Oxford; and afterwards presented to the living of St. Thomas, Oxford. He was, we are told, "a great philologist, an exact mathematician, and a very curious calculator of nativities. He was extremely studious and of a melancholy turn, yet an agreeable companion and very humorous." Such a character might have inspired Shakespeare with the skeleton idea for his "Melancholy Jaques," since the poet and the philosopher were contemporaries. It is curious, however, that although the "Anatomy of Melancholy" is loaded with quotations and references which show that the author was the most catholic of readers, it does not

contain a single allusion to Shakespeare or any of his works.

Democritus Junior showed himself no less original in his death than he had been during his life. He died at Christchurch, at, or very near the time he had some years before predicted from the calculation of his nativity; "and this exactness made it whispered about that, for the glory of astrology and rather than his calculation should fail, he became indeed a *felo de se*."

To turn from the author to the book—which is one of those of which everybody has heard, and the title of which people frequently quote as if they knew all about it, but which, in fact, is actually terra incognita to the general reader—our philosopher divides his material into "Three Partitions, with their several sections, members, and sub-sections, Philosophically, Medicinally, Historically opened and cut up." Moreover, to help us to a better understanding of the book, we are given the author's Abstract of Melancholy in rhymed verse, a "satirical introduction," and a minute synopsis of each partition. In addition to his exhaustive consideration of the subject proper, our author indulges in many and long digressions, which carry him and his readers very far afield indeed. But it must be remembered that digression was a fashion of the literature of his day, when life was slow and books were long. Books, moreover, were bought instead of hired; read, instead of skimmed; kept and re-read instead of sent back to the library. Therefore, it was not thought necessary to treat the reader like a dainty child, to cut up his food into mince-meat, and help it down by means of spices and condiments. Our ancestors could eat beef-steak and drink beer for breakfast, and they were not afraid of being bored by books which now would be thought intolerably heavy in more senses than one. The only concession to the reader lay in the digressions which, as Burton says, "some dislike as frivolous and impertinent, yet I am of Beroaldus his opinion, such digressions do mightily delight and refresh a weary reader, they are like sauce to a bad stomach, and I do therefore most willingly use them."

The first partition of the Anatomy deals with melancholy in general and its causes; the second, with the various cures thereof; and the third, with love and religious melancholy. It is unnecessary to follow the author into the anatomy of the body

and the soul with which he opens his discourse, although the early seventeenth century notion of such matters is curious enough. The chapter upon the causes of melancholy gives opportunity for an amusing digression touching the "Nature of Bad Angels or Divils."

Although Burton does not commit himself in so many words to a positive belief in such beings, he quotes, with all solemnity, the opinion of various writers of all ages upon the attributes of the "divils" inhabiting earth, air, fire, and water. "Terrestrial divils" seems but a sorry name for those genii, fauns, satyrs, wood-nymphs, fairies, and Robin Goodfellows, which, "as they are most conversant with men, so they do them most harme." We are sorry to hear such a bad character of the dear friends of our childhood; however, some of our old recollections of the fairies are confirmed, for Burton credits them with "sweeping the house, and setting of a payle of cleane water, good victuals, and the like, and then they (the householders) should not bee pinched, but find money in their shoes."

A more practical dissertation is that upon diet, which, as a cause of melancholy, might have been placed before the influence of "Divils and Witchcraft." In reading this chapter we discover that the diet specialists of the present day are no new order of beings; but that more than two centuries ago sufferers from melancholy were compelled to be just as particular about the quantity and quality of their food as any of their dyspeptic descendants. Indeed, our author goes far beyond the strictest of modern doctors in the number of edibles that he disallows, inasmuch that those who followed his advice must have been brought within measurable distance of starvation.

Beef, pork, venison, hares, and all kinds of water-fowl are forbidden to him that is afflicted with melancholy; milk, butter, and cheese increase the malady; fish of all kinds are discommended, and vegetables meet with disapproval, only bugloss and lettuce being harmless. Spices, black wines, and cider are bad. Indeed, many authorities forbid beer; but, says Burton, with British sturdiness, "they mean that thicke, blacke, Bohemian beere, used in some parts of Germany. . . . But let them say what they list, to such as are accustomed to it 'tis a most wholesome and pleasant drinke, and hath an especial virtue against melancholy."

Add to this long list of forbidden dainties all puddings stuffed with blood, all baked, fried, broiled, and buttered meats, all cakes, simnels, buns, and cracknels, to say nothing of fritters, pancakes, pies, and those several sauces, sharp or over-sweet, which "prodigious riot and prodigality have invented in this age."

The mere reading of such an Index Expurgatorius is enough to breed the distemper of melancholy in the mind of the lover of good things. In the chapter upon "Diet Rectified," however, the patient is given permission to eat broth, eggs, fruit, and a few other little trifles. As regards quantity of diet, he is told to eat but twice a day, and put seven hours betwixt dinner and supper, "which rule, if we did observe in our colledges," says the student of Christchurch, feelingly, "it would be much better for our healths; but custome, that tyrant, so prevails, that contrary to all good order and rules of physicke, we scarce admit of five."

It may seem curious at first sight that gaming and love of pleasure should be set down among the chief causes of melancholy, but those who agree with the dictum that "life would be tolerable if it were not for its amusements" will find no paradox in the heading of subsection thirteen. Many wives and families can tell of the melancholy in a household pinched by the master's passion for "faulkoners, dogges, and hunting nagger," or for making terraces, orchards, gardens, bowers, and such places of pleasure. We have probably all suffered at the social round game from the common humour of gamesters, who, "if they win, no men living are so jovial and merry, but if they lose, though it be but a trifle, two or three games at tables, or a dealing at cardes for twopence a game, they are so cholericke and testy that no man may speake with them."

As the causes of melancholy are many, so are the cures. The most effectual of these are air, exercise of body and mind, and music. The patient should build his house on a dry, sandy plat, full of downs, as being most commodious for hawking and hunting. His house must face east, with trees to the north, and he must not open his windows in bad weather. In the latter event, he must make artificial air, hot and moist, seasoned with sweet perfumes, and have roses and violets ever in his windows, and posies in his hands. Lastly, he must, above all, have light



enough, with windows in the day, wax candles in the night, neat chambers, good fires, and merry companions.

On the subject of exercise of body and mind our author shows himself to hold most liberal ideas. In his opinion no amusements in moderation are wrong. Hunting and hawking are excellent pastimes, so long as we do not dote too much upon them, and gallop right out of our fortunes. But the most pleasant of all is to make a "petty progress" now and then with some good companions, to visit friends, and see cities, castles, and towns. Burton does not agree with those who, too nicely, take exception to cards and dice, or with those "~~severe~~ Catoes" who heavily censure dancing, singing, or stage-plays, and because of some abuse will quite take away the good use, "as if they should forbid wine because it makes men drunk."

"For my part," says the kindly parson, "let the people freely sing and dance, have their poppet plays, hobby-horses, and bagpipes, play at ball and barley-breaks, and what sports or recreations they like best."

The delights of study, art, and science are recommended for the solace of men patients, while women are evidently thought to be very well off with their curious needleworks, spinning, bone-lace, and many other pretty devices of their own making to adorn their houses, cushions, and chairs, besides the conserves and confections which they show to strangers. Then they have household offices to busy themselves about, and neat gardens, full of exotic plants of all kinds, which they are most ambitious to get, curious to preserve, proud to possess, and "much many times bragge of."

As for music, this is a sovereign remedy against despair and melancholy, and will drive away the "devil" himself. It will be of no avail, however, if the disease proceeded originally from it, and if the patient be some light inamorata, some idle fantastic, who capers in conceit all day long, and thinks of nothing else but how to make jigs, sonnets, and madrigals in commendation of his mistress.

Blushing and ruddiness of the face are afflictions common to melancholy and nervous persons in all ages. If our readers would like to try some approved seventeenth century cures for such discomforts, let them wash their faces in the water of frogs' spawn, or anoint them over-

night with hares' blood. But, best of all, is the advice of a worthy physician of Oxford to one who was thus troubled: "Suppose one looke red, what matter is it; make light of it, who observes it?"

To the third partition, on love melancholy, the author has thought it necessary to write a short preface, vindicating himself from the censure of those who object that love symptoms are too light, too comical a subject for a divine to speak of. He points out that many grave philosophers and many ancient divines have treated of love, and by reason of their ripe experience and staid judgement can give the better cautions and more solid precepts. Moreover, he concludes, "I have not offended your chaster ears with anything that is here written, as many French and Italian authors in their moderne language of late have done."

The ways of lovers and the symptoms of love are described in a manner which shows clearly enough that two hundred years ago young men and maidens had not forgotten all romance and chivalry. It would be difficult to imagine the modern exquisite walking seven or eight times a day through the street where his lady dwells, and making "sleeveless errands" to see her; nor would he be likely to think the way pleasant, and all weather good, while he goes to her house.

In Burton's day the true lover, in the absence of his mistress, would sit under that tree where she did use to sit—many years after sometimes, and though she might be many miles away. He would walk, too, by the river's side which ran past the house where she dwelt; he loved the wind which blew to that coast, and he would never fail to have his chamber window look that way.

Less poetic, but most amusing, as showing how changeless is fashion's change, are the descriptions of the little coxcombs and vanities of the love-sick youths. No sooner does a young man see his sweetheart coming but he smuggles up himself, pulls up his cloak, ties his garters, flicks his hair, and twires his beard. It was the common humour of every suitor to be prodigal in apparel, with a long love-lock, a flower in his ear, perfumed gloves, and every day new suits as the fashion varied.

But the dandies of the period were, as might be expected, left far behind by the ladies of fashion, more especially by

those who were still "on their promotion."

"Why," demands the learned author, "why do they adorn themselves with so many colours of herbs, fictitious flowers, sweet-smelling odours, and those inestimable riches of precious stones? Why do they deck themselves with pendants, bracelets, earrings, chains, girdles, rings, pins, spangles, embroideries, shadows, rebatoes, versicolor ribbands; why do they make such glorious shews with their scarfs, feathers, fans, masks, furs, laces, tiffanies, ruffles, falls, calls, cuffs, damasks, velvets, tinsels, cloth of gold, and silver tissue? . . . Why is it but as a day-net catcheth larks, to make men stoop unto them. . . . To this intent they crush in their feet and bodies, hurt and crucify themselves sometimes in laxe clothes an hundred yards in a gown, and sometimes again so close; now long tails and trains, and then short; now little or no bands, then as big as cart wheels; now loose bodies, then great fardigalls."

It must be allowed that for a bachelor and a clergyman Robert Burton had a most extensive knowledge of the various articles that, in his time, made up the sum of feminine apparel. Let the husbands and fathers who read this account of a fashionable woman's war-paint two hundred years ago, be filled with thankfulness that they live at the close of the nineteenth century, when a beautiful simplicity (expensive sometimes, it is true) is the order of the day.

Passing over the symptoms and cures of religious melancholy and despair, we come to the conclusion of the whole matter. In the last six words may be found the pith and kernel of all the good advice contained in the book, namely, this: "Be not solitary, be not idle." In very truth, setting aside such blessings as a clear conscience and a good digestion, which are soon lost and not easily recovered by the average mortal, the most effectual antidote to the disease of melancholy consists of a well-balanced mixture of hard work and congenial society.

## A "BIJOU" PARISIAN THEATRE.

### THE PALAIS ROYAL.

I AM not in a position to say whether the shareholders of this little temple of Momus are at the present day as financially prosperous as they were thirty years

ago; but I can vouch for the fact that in 1860, when a certain number of shares, originally issued at five hundred francs each, were sold by auction, they realised more than ten times that amount, and were still rising in value. No theatre in Paris has been so exceptionally fortunate as the Palais Royal, notwithstanding its limited dimensions and very insufficient accommodation; and this may be attributed partly to the attractive style of pieces produced there, and partly to the tact displayed by the management in the selection of as excellent and mirth-provoking a set of actors as could possibly be brought together.

My earliest recollections of this theatre date from 1843, at which period Mademoiselle Déjazet, whose engagement terminated a few months later, was still the chief attraction. From the very commencement of her dramatic career, this inimitable actress had struck out a line for herself, in which she stood alone, unique and unapproachable; often treading on dangerous ground, but never positively infringing, however narrowly she might escape doing so, the laws of decorum. The most trivial and rapid dialogue seemed, when spoken by her, to acquire point and brilliancy; and the dullest plot, animated by her marvellous verve, rarely failed to interest and amuse. She had no pretension to beauty, but her eye was singularly penetrating and expressive; and her voice, although naturally shrill, had a purity of intonation which many practised vocalists might have envied. It was impossible to listen to her, while singing Frédéric Bérat's charming melody, "*La Lisette de Béranger*," without a thrill of delight; and no one, with the single exception of Arnal, could "*détailler*" a vaudeville complot with such exquisite perfection.

The popularity, however, as well on the stage as in private life, enjoyed in so remarkable a degree by Mademoiselle Déjazet, was by no means entirely due to her artistic superiority, or to that ready wit which justified her being entitled the Sophie Arnould of her time. These naturally commanded admiration, but it was to other and far more precious qualities that she owed the esteem and affection of all who knew her. It was her unfailing kindness of heart, her unobtrusive sympathy, and her untiring zeal to co-operate towards the relief of those among her comrades whom age or sickness had rendered in-

capable of supporting themselves by their own exertions, that endeared "la bonne Virginie" to the little world in which she lived, ever acting up to the principle of conduct inculcated by her self-chosen motto, "Bien faire et laisser dire!"

Her usual partner in such pieces as "Indiana et Charlemagne" was Achard, a bustling and jovial actor gifted with a pleasant singing voice and an abundance of broad humour, occasionally bordering on vulgarity; he subsequently migrated to the Gymnase, where he was altogether out of his element, and soon after retired from the stage. His two sons have attained, each in his particular line, a certain celebrity; the elder as an operatic tenor of excellent repute, and the younger as the hero of the farcical comedy "Bébé."

Achard's place at the Palais Royal was efficiently filled by Levassor, a clever comedian of Protean versatility, who was seen at his best in pieces like "Brelan de troupiers," where, as the representative of three different personages, he so admirably disguised not only his outward appearance, but also his voice, walk, and manner, as almost to defy recognition. As a "chansonnette" singer he stood alone, his humour being irresistibly contagious, and his articulation so distinct that, even while apparently speaking in a whisper, not a word he uttered ever escaped the audience. Levassor was at one time as popular in London as John Parry, which is saying a great deal; and as inevitable a feature in fashionable drawing-rooms as Mademoiselle Vandermeersch and her canaries. Shortly before his death, he started on a professional tour through Southern Germany, and the last time I met him was at Creuznach, some five-and-twenty years ago, when he gave a "matinée" at the Kurhaus, patronised by exactly fourteen persons, half of whom at least were unmistakably on the free list.

A very droll member of the company was Alcide Tousez, whose exclusive privilege it was to personate every possible variety of the genus simpleton, from the victimised dupe to the blundering "Jocrisse." A more outrageously comical figure has rarely, if ever, been seen on the stage; the effect produced on the spectator by his flaxen wig, enormous nose, and self-satisfied air, combined with a lisping volubility of utterance, the extreme indistinctness of which rendered it difficult to catch more than a word here and there of what he said, was irresistible and indescribable.

I have a pleasant recollection of Leménil, and more particularly of his wife, the lively Madame Patin, in "Les Premières Armes de Richelieu." In 1848, or thereabouts, they were both engaged at the French theatre in St. Petersburg, where they became great favourites, and remained, I believe, until their joint retirement from the stage.

After the departure of Mademoiselle Déjazet from the Palais Royal, it was generally supposed that the loss of so brilliant a star would occasion a temporary decline in the receipts; such, however, was not the case, Manager Dormeuil having other trump cards in his hand, and playing them precisely at the moment when they were wanted. These were Sainville, Ravel, and Grassot, as comical a trio as ever trod the boards, each unrivalled in his peculiar line, and enjoying an equal share of popularity. Of the three, Sainville was perhaps the most indispensable, his indefatigable zeal and excellent memory being as precious to the management as his inexhaustible spirits and gaiety were to the public. He was almost as stout as Lablache, and, possessing a broadly comic and flexible physiognomy, could assume every variety of expression with perfect facility; as the traditional "compère" of the yearly "revues," a part which obliged him to be on the stage from the commencement to the close of the piece, he was inimitable.

Ravel, on the contrary, as many London playgoers may remember, was short and slightly built, with a peculiar elasticity of step and a fidgety manner of treading the stage, the ludicrous effect of which was heightened by a self-sufficient air and a most comical intonation of the voice. Every joke and repartee was accompanied by a knowing smirk, not unlike that of Buckstone, which made his audience roar with laughter without their knowing the reason why. His two great triumphs, "L'Etourneau" and "Le Chapeau de paille d'Italie," have died with him.

As for Grassot, I scarcely know how to describe him. Of histrionic talent he had very little, his voice was a discordant croak, and at times almost inaudible; but his face and figure were so quaintly grotesque, and his solemn shakes of the head so outrageously comical, that, even before he had opened his mouth, the whole house was in convulsions of laughter. His dress was on a par with his other eccentricities, generally consisting of the loudest and most flaring checks, which must have been ex-

pressly invented for him, such monstrosities assuredly never having been seen before or since. With these adjuncts, and the extraordinary mixture of nervousness and assurance which accompanied every word and gesture, he could afford to do without any more legitimate artistic qualities, and was undeniably the most popular actor of the troupe.

The parts assigned to the lady members of the Palais Royal company are seldom important, and I have often wondered how Mademoiselle Nathalie, who had previously held a high position at the Gymnase, and who terminated her career as "sociétaire" of the Comédie Française, could have accepted an engagement there. Her stay, however, was short, and beyond the fact of her exciting intense jealousy behind the scenes by wearing, in some piece or other, a magnificent diamond tiara, this episode in her theatrical life was a singularly uneventful one. Her only rivals, if they could be called such, were Mademoiselle Scriwaneck, a lively little actress with a shrill voice, and a deplorable mania for imitating Déjazet, and Mademoiselle Duverger, a remarkably handsome woman, who, fancying herself entitled to better parts than those allotted to her, subsequently migrated to a boulevard theatre, where, her dramatic talent being absolutely nil, she was speedily judged and found wanting.

As years went on, the old actors gradually disappeared, and the sole remaining link between the first and second periods of the Palais Royal was Lhéritier, who, from small beginnings, ultimately became an established favourite. Of the new recruits, two deserve especial mention, namely, Hyacinthe and Gil Pérez, both of whom were fixtures at this theatre during the rest of their career. Hyacinthe's nose was his fortune, and he made the most of it. Whenever a piece hung heavy, a gentle stroke on this very prominent feature sufficed to put the audience into good humour, and to bespeak their indulgence for the shortcomings of the author. He had, moreover, a certain broad drollery of his own, altogether different from that of Gil Pérez, which was quieter and more refined. The latter, who, while convulsing the whole house with his quaint sallies, never relaxed into a smile, depended chiefly for his effects on the peculiarity of his high-pitched voice, which, for squeakiness and falsity of intonation, could only be compared to a clarionet out of tune.

A still more important addition to the

company was Geoffroy, the original and best representative of Balzac's "Mercadet," and one of the most exceptionally gifted comedians of his day. His proper place was at the Théâtre Français, and his refusal to accept an engagement offered him by the committee was a godsend to the Palais Royal, for what would "La Cagnotte" and "La Boule" have been without his invaluable co-operation! He was ably seconded in many of his "creations" by René Lugnet, Pellerin, Lassouche, and the mercurial Brasseur, who died in 1890, after successfully managing a theatre of his own for several years.

A good "comic old woman" is a necessity at the Palais Royal, and never has the post been so admirably filled as by Madame Thierret, the most irrepressible of "duègnes," audacious in monologue and even more reckless in gesture! Nor must I forget the demure Alphonsine, with her soft voice and candid air, nor the three graces of the theatre, Alice Regnault, Léontine Massin, and Julia Baron. Cleverer than either of the trio was the petulant Magnier, and, more attractive than all put together, the siren Céline Chaumont, then in the early bloom of youth, and at her best when singing, as she only could sing them, the couplets of Régine in the "Princesse de Trébizonde."

## FEENA.

### A COMPLETE STORY.

I MADE her acquaintance in the train, between Munich and Verona. She was travelling with her mother, and they were both in deep mourning, for her father had died only a month previously in Berlin. I could not help noticing her, she was of so strong a type of American beauty—hair of dull gold, large hazel eyes, a pretty little mouth, and a small straight nose. Her vivacity, too, was remarkable, and when she laughed her expression was enchanting.

We soon got on speaking terms. The scenery of the Tyrol was not to be viewed in silence. Besides, it was a long journey, and hunger made itself felt. They had a luncheon basket from their hotel, and I had one from mine. She preferred my wine to hers, and used my silver knife to cut her orange with. These trifles go a considerable way when one is abroad. Long before we got to Verona, I knew a good deal about them. Her mother had not minded falling asleep when it grew



dark, and this seemed to set the girl talking with more freedom.

Her name was Feena—Feena Stanhope. She was of old Virginian stock, brought up in Paris, and with the ways of a girl of the world.

I do not mind admitting that I lost my heart to her. So, too, did a young Bavarian who was with us. He told me so while we stretched our legs at Innsprück, and I felt inclined to smite him for his confidence.

As I did not care whether I went on that night to Venice or stayed in Verona, the girl's "Oh, do stay" decided me.

We went to the "Hôtel de Londres," a big old place, with a pretty inner courtyard full of exotics. There, among the plants, we had our little supper together—just some soup, chicken, and cheese, with a flask of Chianti. The waiter behind us looked as if he too was in love with Feena, and so I said I thought we could get on very well without him. He took his dismissal with excellent grace.

The Bavarian, by-the-bye, had gone on to Venice, not, however, without ascertaining at what hotel the Stanhopes proposed to sojourn. He coloured to his hair roots when they asked him, as a matter of form, to favour them with a call. I didn't ask him to call at my hotel to see me.

The next day we three went on to Venice. It was a lovely morning, and the distant white Alps against the profound blue of the sky might have sent a poet half crazy with poetic joys.

For my part, I didn't take much notice of the scenery. It was not new to me, and I was much better pleased to play the part of travelling valet and companion to my friends. I had already entered heartily into a quarrel with the customs' officials at the frontier, on behalf of the contents of one of Feena's trunks. It overjoyed me that Feena and I won our case. The customs' officer bowed low, and let us pass.

At Venice I could think of nothing but Feena. As I purposed staying here several weeks, I left the "Hôtel d'Angleterre," and took a suite of rooms in a private house, very near to the "Hôtel de l'Europe," which the Stanhopes patronised. It was delightful. I saw them every day, and either supped, dined, or promenaded with them. I flatter myself, whether or not I am still in her memory, Feena will not easily think of the picture galleries and churches of the dear old city without also thinking of me.

Then the gondolas! Ah me! Of course she and I went out in them, generally accompanied by her mother, but now and then—after dinner—alone.

How heavenly it was! She lay on one side of the cushioned cabin, and I on the other. Thus we were wont to glide over the starlit water, while Giacomo, our man, sang soft Venetian ballads. On two or three occasions we hired a second gondola, with several musicians on board. The whispering of their music and melodies, with the gentle wash of the waves against the swaying sides of the boat, was almost too sweet.

At such times I needed no lamp except Feena's eyes. How large and bright they were, and how full of merry talk she was!

We would have gone to the theatres also, but for the fact that they were still in mourning for Mr. Stanhope. Yet, ecstatic though many of my Venetian hours thus spent were, I was not altogether happy.

There was the young Bavarian, in the first place. I saw a good deal more of him than I wished to see—at the "Hôtel de l'Europe." Unfortunately, he talked English excellently—thanks to his university education. He was also amusing, and won Mrs. Stanhope with his stories. But he did not win Feena, who laughed at him with me.

I have an idea now, however, that it is possible Feena laughed at me when she was with him. She was not bad at the core, but she was certainly made as most pretty girls are made.

Well, the Stanhopes were only to be in Venice ten days.

It was hideous to me to think of remaining when they had gone. But I had taken my rooms by solemn agreement for a month. Besides, I had work to do, and much more to see. So one morning I had the melancholy privilege of helping them both into the train for Florence, and bidding them a doleful and yet not altogether broken-hearted adieu. I, too, had by then settled to be in Florence a month later.

I put newspapers, and fruit, and iced wine into their "coupé," shook hands tenderly, was enraptured at the slight but unmistakeable pressure of Feena's fingers against mine, and then stood bareheaded and miserable while the train sneaked away as if it were ashamed of itself for thus bereaving me.

After this I saw more of the Bavarian. He told me that he thought Feena an arrant

flirt, and I told him that he did not know enough about Anglo-Saxon girls to give an opinion in the matter. We did not agree very well. Especially we quarrelled when he informed me he had seen Feena distinctly "making eyes"—he used the odious phrase in English—at the "bersaglière" officers in the Piazza san Marco. But in the end we were on very fair terms of intimacy until he, too, left Venice. He was going to take the baths somewhere. He got to laugh latterly when he mentioned Feena. He did not suppose he should ever see her again, much as he was, he avowed, enamoured of her. It would take a great deal, he said, to make him marry her, even if she were padded with thousand-dollar bills. For pastime she was admirable, but matrimony is different.

This dissolved our intimacy altogether. I said farewell to Maximilian von Marlin, as he was called, without even a pretence of regret.

The next month passed with leaden slowness. I met an English major of Hussars, and together we killed some of the moments. But even now I think of those Venetian days as among the most trying of my experience, yet the weather was fine, the theatres were brightened with brilliant companies, and one festival succeeded another in the fair old city of canals.

At length the day of release came. I wired to Florence to make sure I should be received in the "pension" to which the Stanhopes had gone, and set off in high spirits.

Never did the vineyards of beautiful Italy seem to be more lovely than on this day. Bologna for once did not tempt me to stop and spend a few hours with a friend whose acquaintance I had made in travelling very much out of the beaten track in the east of Europe some years ago. I was impatient with our slow crossing of the Apennines, and was only content when at last we ran with a scream into the station of Florence.

I found Feena more fascinating than before. She was a little cold at first, and her mother gave me much the kinder greeting. But her frigidity soon left her, and we made a heap of plans about the galleries and the neighbourhood.

The "pension" was a luxurious building on Lung' Arno. I had a bedroom upholstered in yellow silk, and the rest of the house was in keeping with this. From the large drawing-room two massive marble balconies connected with the outer air, and

looked upon the flashing river and the gay heights of San Miniato beyond.

Oh, those balconies! I never find myself in Florence now but I look at them and wonder at the transitoriness of our human passions. A most unnecessary exertion, to be sure, considering how brief a time our bodies, which are the cupboard of these passions, even themselves endure!

Feena had been introduced to the best "modiste" in Florence, which says much. She was more alluring than ever. The contrast between her golden hair and hazel eyes and the jetty black of her gowns was somehow greatly emphasized. I never tired of looking at her. Indeed, I had plenty of opportunity, for did I not sit next to her daily at the dinner-table, and opposite her in the carriage perhaps twice a day on an average?

She was the talk of the "pension." As usual, there were a number of elderly ladies in the house, and they seemed to think Feena was too beautiful to be quite proper. Heaven only knows how they got such a twist in their imbecile old wits. They peered at us over their soup, with their eyes wide open, and were wont to whisper solemnly, as if they had something dreadful to say about her.

But in the drawing-room the girl was able to win even their tough old hearts, parchmented upon a daily diet of gossip and uncharitable conjecture. There were some children among the "pensionnaires," and to see Feena with them was a sight to make a stone image sigh with admiration.

For all that, she was of so volatile a nature that she would suddenly break from the midst of an admiring circle at such a time, and accost me with a direct invitation to go out on to the balcony with her.

I was on that balcony much too much for my peace of mind. Florentine nights are of themselves a love lesson. Feena was another. And the tinkle, tinkle of the mandolines in the street beneath us, with their sweet, familiar airs, and the after appeal for "a soldi, lady fair," was yet an additional cause likely to convince me that unless I could get Feena for a wife, my subsequent existence would not be worth a snap of finger and thumb.

Several times under the starlight, and with the river at our feet reflecting the hundreds of lamps on both banks of the stream, it was on my lips to say: "Feena mia, will you be mine for life?"

But there was always something in the

way; either the memory of her mother's words that her daughter must marry a rich man, or the thought that I was not worthy of so radiant, so queenly a creature, or the paralyzing fancy that Feena did not really love me.

She seemed to have an hypnotismal knowledge when these ambitions were strongest within me; and though she might the moment before have called me "Carlo mio," with a glorious glance, she could, in the very nick of time to prevent the proposal, turn aside for some feigned purpose, or speak to one or other of the young men who were also her victims, but who were content to sigh towards her at a distance.

This fool's paradise lasted a month. For a few days in the time Feena was ill—sufficiently so to be confined to her room, though not to be kept in bed. During her indisposition I spent an anxious half-hour daily in the flower market by the Via Tornabuoni, and my bouquets to her cost more money than I could well afford. But I considered myself fully recompensed in being allowed to present them to her in person. I do not think I shall soon forget her appearance as an invalid, robed in a white silk gown, with swansdown at the neck. She was always then particularly bewitching. I suppose my worst nights were those while she was poorly. I was cruelly tormented by the thought what I should do.

But the girl herself was all this time playing her own part.

It came out one day, when, as I was descending the "pension" stairs, I caught the hall servant in low colloquy with an elegantly dressed young man of the kind I had come to detest. He was the Marchese something or other—at least, his visiting-card said so—and the packet of papers he was urging the servant to take to the Signora Stanhope—Feena's mamma—were—what do you think? The family credentials, documents, etc., upon the strength of which, plus his title, he hoped to be permitted to pay his respects to the Signorina Feena!

All this came out by degrees. Mrs. Stanhope made a confidant of me. I could have wished she had not; and yet I should have been very angry if the matter had not come to my ears.

From that day forward Feena was less the old Feena than a new Feena, in whom I could not help seeing a lamentable amount of commonplace, vulgar ambition.

She was tender enough to me when I was with her; but she did not disguise from me that she was caught by the tinsel of the Marchese's title and family documents. His estate in Calabria was said to be a surprising number of hectares in extent. I don't know how much a hectare means in English acreage, nor do I wish to know; but I couldn't help reminding Feena that she knew very little about her precious Marchese, except that he was under five feet six in height, with a strut like an ill-bred factory girl's. She would laugh at my strictures, and acknowledge their truth. All the same, I saw she meant to dazzle her American aunts and uncles and cousins by becoming a marchioness as soon as possible.

The closer the matter came to completion, the more Mrs. Stanhope seemed to rely upon me. Would I go into Calabria, and make sure of the truth of the young gentleman's words? She asked me this one day. I am afraid I was almost rude in reply. I expressed my willingness to kick the gentleman out of the "pension" the next time I found him there; but as for interesting myself thus far in his suit it was out of the question.

Be it understood that ere this I had asked Feena to be my wife, and had failed in my petition. It was nothing in consolation that she said she liked me more than she liked any other man, and said she would have married me gladly if I had ten or twelve thousand dollars a year. She confessed, too, though I had almost anticipated the confession, that she meant not to let her heart interfere with her life schemes. She proposed to play a great part in the world; money and rank were essential for her ambitions.

On this understanding I left Florence one hot day. She would not see me to say "good-bye," but wrote me a "billet-doux" at one o'clock on the night previous, in which she said more than she ought to have said considering that by this time it was as good as settled that she was to marry the Marchese.

I say nothing about the immense interest our "pensionnaires" took in this affair. It was all done in so open a manner that they could hardly believe in it. I fancied that the Stanhopes and I were three shrewd adventurers, beneath whose united plots the wretched little Italian was to be ground to powder—or at least his estates were.

It would have amused me at another

time to enjoy the fruits of this misconception. But, as it was, naturally I did not like it; and so I left Florence.

Mrs. Stanhope saw me off at the station. She, poor woman, was almost as much a sufferer as myself at the shrine of her daughter's coquetry. She did not believe in the Marchese, and she did not trust the Italian nature.

"Now that you are going," she said to me, "I shall feel lonely indeed. Goodness knows what will happen, Feena is so self-willed. But you shall hear from me."

Well, for two months I knocked about in Sicily, and in that time almost drove Feena out of my thoughts.

In June I returned to England, found letters from both the Stanhopes, and learnt that the marriage would take place in San Francisco in September. In due course I received a grand, emblazoned, and very odoriferous sheet of paper, inviting me to be present at the wedding.

I did not think it worth while to cross the Atlantic in the autumn, and then the continent, for the satisfaction of seeing how lovely Feena could look as a bride. It was quite enough that I coerced myself sufficiently to write a brief note wishing her every happiness. I considered that page of my life to be closed for ever. But it was not. There is this to be said of life, that it need never be oppressively dull. Of course, if you fix yourself in a country village, and forswear metropolitan brightness and stir, it can hardly fail to be dull. But then, unless you are obliged to do so, why do it?

The next spring, as usual, found me abroad, gradually dropping from Dresden to the south of Italy. By May I was in Naples. I was happy enough in my own way. Feena did not enter my head one day in seven, and then only for an instant. Perhaps I wondered how she would look as a matron. It was not more than this.

But one morning I was glancing at the ices in the famous confectioner's shop at the beginning of the Toledo, and meditating whether they were as palatable as they looked, when I heard some one call my name.

I turned round in the twinkling of an eye. I should have known that voice among a million.

Yes, it was Feena; somewhat altered, but still the Feena whom I remembered as the absorbing complement of Venice and Florence.

She was stouter, more majestic, and

there was more strength in her face; but she was still so beautiful that even while we were speaking the first words, I remarked how nearly every man turned round as he passed her.

"And the Marchese?" I asked, as indifferently as I could.

"Oh, I don't know where he is—nor care," she replied, with a pout of those pretty lips of hers.

"Good Heavens!"

We entered the ice shop, and while we trifled with the sweetstuff she told me something of her history. Married in September, she had soon begun to find out that the gentleman was not all he ought to be. In Paris he had used threats to get money from her—the threats had ended in a blow, whereupon Feena had dramatically roused the hotel upon the Marchese, and a scandal was the consequence. It got into the Paris papers, and then the American.

But worse was to follow.

From Paris they travelled down to Calabria—to the immeasurable estate which from time immemorial (so the Marchese said) had been in the hands of his family.

Here, for six or seven dreadful weeks, Feena had endured his society, and that of a fat, plebeian dame who said she was his aunt, alone in a ramshackle house built in an oak forest of the Apennines.

"Ennui" was too mild a word to express her state of mind. It appeared, too, that she was there not to enjoy a continuance of the honeymoon happiness (though there was not much of that, I judge), but the better to be constrained to give up her money to her husband.

There was no American Consul for her to appeal to—no society of any kind except the vulgar aunt and two or three peasants, and the howling of the wind in the trees of the elevated forest.

Then, and not till then, Feena began to suspect that her humiliation was to be extreme. She questioned her husband's marquis-ship, and she was right. It transpired that the fellow was merely a clever rogue, absolutely untitled, without even an olive countship (a hundred years ago a multitude of Italians got the title of Count as a reward for planting so much of their land in olives), and that from first to last she was victimised.

I can fancy the poor girl had a bad time when she realised this. She was hot-tempered, and she did not scruple to menace the sham Marchese with the vengeance of the United States. This



annoyed him, and he beat her more than once, and with a stout orange stick.

Feena would not endure this, and so one evening, having bribed a Calabrian peasant to guide her, she evaded the family castle, and, after divers hardships, reached Cosenza, and thence got to Naples.

She had been in Naples a month when she saw me at the shop window. For her reputation's sake she had gone into a convent until the arrival of her mother from America. She was, she said, bored to death; but still she was able to laugh and to feel tolerably happy in spite of what she had undergone.

I could hardly believe my ears as I listened to her. It seemed so monstrous. That this pretty girl (she was but just of age) should have had her life wrecked in such a way was almost incredible.

Yet even while I looked at her I had an inkling why she was so little really depressed. Her heart had never been interested in the business. It had been a sort of commercial investment. True, it had turned out sadly amiss; but she was young, and she had the American spirit of perseverance which urged her not to mind if her first effort had failed.

"I have had a good square talk about it with the American Consul" ("Amurrican," she said, but all speech was melodious on her tongue), "and he thinks I can get a divorce in the Italian courts."

She said this quite elatedly.

"And afterwards?" I ventured to ask.

"Oh, who can tell? But, say, isn't Naples enchanting? I'm hoping to hear mamma is at Liverpool any day, and once she comes we'll have a rare nice time again. You'll be here for weeks, won't you?"

I said it was exceedingly likely.

"My! How glad mamma will be!"

"And you, Feena?"

"Why, certainly. But now I mustn't stay any longer. The lady outside in the car is the superior of the convent—don't know what she'll think about all this, but she knows the history of that brute. Anyhow, give me your address, and we'll see plenty of each other when mamma comes."

Then we parted, and I went off to my hotel with a good deal to think about. The superior of the convent had looked rather hard at me, I fancied.

Well, in due time Mrs. Stanhope reached Naples. Feena was jubilant over her release from monastic life, which could have suited no one less. They went straight-

way to the "Grand Hotel," and took a lovely room, with a double balcony, overlooking the bay. This done, Mrs. Stanhope put herself into communication with the Consul, and a certain Neapolitan nobleman who had interested himself in Feena's case, and whose influence at Court was considerable.

Yes, it was decided to bring an action for divorce. There were divers pleas on behalf of it; and cruelty was but one of them. It was confidently hoped that the King would take the part of Feena, and, after the decree, even allow her to keep the title of Marchesa, which she had acquired so expensively, and for so short a time.

No sooner did she realise that this was possible, than the girl renewed her ancient ways. She seemed never to go out without making a conquest. There were several noblemen in the hotel, and these were soon all on her list of admirers. They placed their carriages at her disposal, and professed themselves enchanted to be allowed to drive her and Mrs. Stanhope to Posillipo, or anywhere else.

It was futile to argue with the girl.

"No, no," she said, when I had got impatient with her one day. "That fellow down Calabria way has cheated me out of a good deal of fun, and I guess I'll make up for it."

Even the argument that she was injuring her prospects of a divorce did not sufficiently frighten her.

"I believe I'm becoming reckless," she whispered to me one evening, in the Villa Gardens, during the fashionable stroll before dinner.

Indeed, I, too, had come to that opinion then. The way she pressed my arm at intervals when she wished to be kind, made me see that the old Feena was gone for ever.

Even the Consul interposed, with sedate headshakings.

"What can I do, though?" asked poor Mrs. Stanhope. "She says she's a married woman, and means to do as she pleases. It's not a bit of use trying to hold her in."

Often, after dinner, when I called at the hotel, I found the girl still at the dinner-table, holding forth in a wild manner to the young gentlemen who had dined at the table d'hôte on purpose to see her. Her mother would interpose with a "Now, Feena, come upstairs, dear;" but her daughter did not heed these invitations. My appearance, more than aught

else, seemed to draw her back to her senses. With a lovely bow, she would rise and leave the room.

Still later, under the starlight and the mild, sweet air of Naples, I was allowed to smoke my cigar on their balcony. Then I used to think of our evenings in Florence, a year ago; for Feena would insist on coming into the open with a chair, and sitting with her hair down for the moon to shine upon. How her eyes would gleam in the half shadow, to be sure! There was something almost terrifying in their splendour.

It might chance that the Neapolitan ballad singers would come round at such a time. Nothing then would suit Feena's turn, but she must fling a lira or two to them, and keep them strumming sentimental airs by the half hour—she and I on the balcony, and a crowd of the Neapolitan youth below! It was not altogether good form; and in a girl suing for a divorce, it was more than indiscreet.

Well, I must hurry to the end—the sad end.

The divorce suit came on, and failed. The King had heard much of Feena and her beauty, had seen her at a reception, and got an exaggerated idea of her conduct. It was just what was sure to happen. But it came as a bad blow to both Mrs. Stanhope and myself.

I don't think it affected Feena very much. She pretended to laugh and make light of it.

"Let him come and take me, if he dare," she said, alluding to her husband, the false Marchese.

But all the while it was plain she was drifting nearer and nearer to the goal which it is ruin for any woman to touch.

She was more and more with her noble acquaintances of Naples; and there were times when—so her mother told me—she insisted on being alone with them in these drives.

"Why not take her away?" I asked.

"Because she has said she will not go," was the dolorous reply. "She has been her own bane, poor girl, and I don't know what to do."

It was about a week after this that one day I received a note from Mrs. Stanhope asking me to come round to the hotel immediately.

I did so, to find that Feena had gone off in the yacht of a young Count, who had been one of her most persistent followers.

This is the last, hitherto, that I have heard of Feena. I could not stay longer in Naples. Mrs. Stanhope promised to give me intelligence of what transpired after this crushing step; but I have not heard from her either. This, to me, implies the worst possible.

Some day I may see her again; but I may sincerely say that I hope not. I do not care to think what she would look like now.

And yet, from the first, she was more sinned against than sinning.

## THE THIRTEENTH BRYDAIN.

By MARGARET MOULE.

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### CHAPTER I.

It was an April afternoon, but the air was full of east wind. The clouds which had gathered slowly all the morning lay in heavy grey masses, very low, and very near to the earth; and their nearness so intensified their heaviness as to make it seem almost oppressive. It was very dark, from the effect of these same masses of clouds. Once or twice during the afternoon the clouds had broken suddenly and left a long, silver-edged rift, from which a cold ray of light had streamed out; but this was only for a moment at a time. The next, they had rolled heavily together again and were again driven slowly before the east wind. Side by side with the darkness caused by the clouds, and seeming to struggle with it, was the clear, cold glare which is an inseparable accompaniment of an east wind. It is not light in itself; neither does it give any light; it merely accentuates in the clear distinctness which it brings to every detail in a landscape the bitter keenness of the sword-edged wind that is sweeping across it with merciless cutting power.

In its clearness the hills, on this cold spring afternoon, stood out against the grey clouds with a sharp outline; and every tuft of withered brown heather on them, every grey crag of stone, even the dead fragments of last year's bracken, stood out also. The road that led over the brow of the nearest hill gleamed in the cold clearness like a broad, white ribbon. At the foot of the hills lay a deep ravine, which seemed to cut off the hills abruptly from the landscape opposite. The ravine

was wooded on either bank, and of the trees in it, bent as they were before the wind, every branch and every trunk seemed to be defined and separated from its fellow, so distinct were their outlines in the bitter light. Just above the ravine, on the opposite side to the hills, lay a little village; and to-day every angle of its cottage roofs, every twist in the crooked little chimneys, and every curl of blue smoke that struggled up from them, looked as if it had been drawn with a sharp and very dark pencil against a heavy, indefinite background. The village ran irregularly along the bank of the ravine to its head, where, just above the spot at which it suddenly ended, stood, dark and lowering against the sky, a grey stone house, tall and square, with an octagonal turret at one corner.

If the rest of the landscape looked bleak and dreary in the bitter wind, the grey stone house seemed to attract to itself all the most gloomy characteristics of the day, and by its very form and presence to accentuate them a hundredfold.

The very wind seemed to gain an added sharpness as it whistled round the four gaunt grey walls; the cold light seemed more weird and unnatural for touching the panes of glass in the narrow windows, and the dreary stretch of moorland behind seemed far more dreary for the tall, forbidding outline on its edge.

All day long the grimness of that grey stone building had seemed to possess an irresistible attraction for the inhabitants of Brydain—the little village which had lain on the bank of the ravine and faced those dark Perthshire hills for centuries. Very few of its inhabitants had left their own houses on this bitter day, but of those who had, none had gone out or none come in without a glance at the tall, gaunt building.

Of the men who, at five o'clock, were beginning to come home from their outdoor work with steps that were quick and hurrying in their desire to gain shelter from the cold misery of the day, no one of them as they entered the village was, as usual, speculating on the next day's weather, or talking over his neighbour's concerns with his comrades; but one and all directed their eyes to the grey stone house, and looked it at with a distinct look of curiosity and unusual interest.

Just as three or four of them approached the village, a door of one of the cottages, at the end furthest from the grey stone house, was opened, and an old woman came out holding a kettle in her hand.

She was withered and bent with age, and the high cap she wore seemed by its size to make her small frame look smaller still. She clasped her shawl across her tightly as she felt the first breath of the east wind.

"Ech, but it's cauld!" she said to herself; and then she, as if instinctively, turned towards the grey house also. "Yon'll be dree the day," she said, shivering. Then, seeming to remember the kettle she held, she crossed the road with trembling steps and tried to fill it at the little burn which ran down the side of the ravine to join a wider stream at the bottom. But her hands trembled with cold as well as with age, and the handle of the kettle slipped from her shaking old fingers and rolled down the bank. The old woman stood watching it helplessly until it was caught and held by a tuft of brushwood, and then she looked around almost imploringly as if for help to recover it. Just at this moment the little group of men who had been approaching the village reached it, and the foremost, catching sight of her face, quickened his steps. He was a lad of about nineteen, stalwart and strong, though short and thick-set.

"What ails you, Elspeth?" he said. "What is it you are wanting?"

The old woman, in a quavering voice, explained what had happened, and in another moment Sandy Macfarlane was actively scrambling down among the heather and brushwood beside the burn in pursuit of the kettle.

Meanwhile, the other men had come up, and, after a glance at Sandy, seemed to find comments unnecessary.

"He'll be back just now," observed the most communicative; and then they, like the old woman, turned towards the grey stone house. She turned with them, apparently forgetting entirely, for the moment, Sandy, the kettle, and the bitter wind, for she let her shawl fall apart as she held out her hand towards the stone house.

"And so the Laird's end came to him the same way as his fore-elders," she said. "It's plain they must all dree their weird."

"His burying was a gran' sight," said the man who had spoken before; after an almost imperceptible pause, during which he seemed to be striving to find a different channel for the conversation, "and the minister was gey gifted at the grave."

"And the laddie'll be by his lane," continued old Elspeth, "and he'll be by his lane till his life's end," she added, reflect-

tively. "And what'll he be doing the day, think you, poor bit laddie?"

"Is it Brydain you're calling a bit laddie, then?" asked another man, who looked about five-and-twenty. "He will be of one age with myself."

"And what other will you call yourself, Tammas Macgregor?" said the old woman, turning round on him sharply. "I held you in my arms when you wore your swathing-clothes, and I held Brydain the same! It'll be wae for him up there by his lane with Mackenzie," she added, after a pause, in which she took breath after her brief outburst of wrath.

"The young Laird'll marry on a wife," struck in Sandy Macfarlane, cheerily. He had joined the group unobserved, a moment or two before, holding the recovered kettle in his hand. But with his words an odd silence fell. There was a pause, and then old Elspeth's voice sounded a little more tremulous as she said, slowly:

"He'll no be for marrying, you ken."

Sandy Macfarlane, and the young man of whose age Elspeth had been so contemptuous, simultaneously turned to her at this. There was a mixed expression on both their faces, consisting of incredulous disagreement with her words, or their meaning, which they seemed fully to understand, and a deprecatory respect for her age, which made them both hesitate. But young Macgregor apparently overcame this, for he was just about to speak when the words were checked on his very lips by a sudden movement on the part of Elspeth.

"The laddie himsel'!" she said. And the men, with a hasty glance round at the road, touched their caps roughly but heartily.

The salutation was returned by a young man who had come up the village street unnoticed, and now passed the little group with one or two rapid strides. In the clear, cold glow every line of his figure and face was as distinct as the details of the scene around. He was tall—his height could not have been far short of six feet—and he was very broad-shouldered. His head was bowed, so as to avoid the full blast of the wind, but his face, or what could be seen of it above the plaid that was thrown twice round his shoulders, and the cap which was pulled rather low on his forehead, was evidently handsome. A pair of very keen, very deep-set blue eyes glanced at the group as he saluted them, and the hair which showed below it was of a bright

golden-brown. He was wearing a dark tweed suit, with a band of wide crape on his left arm. There was something rather pathetic and inconsistent about the strong young figure and its signs of mourning that seemed, as the young man passed on, to stop Thomas Macgregor and Sandy Macfarlane from beginning the argument they had prepared for old Elspeth. They watched the tall figure for a moment in silence, and then, with a brief good-night, Sandy handed Elspeth her kettle, and the group scattered itself into its component fragments, Sandy and the other men respectively seeking their various homes, while old Elspeth very slowly recrossed the road to her cottage with the kettle, which, besides recovering, Sandy had filled for her.

"Poor bit laddie!" she said again, as she opened the door. "It's no to be expected that I should live to see his end, for which of us can tell how it'll be fulfilled?"

Meanwhile the tall young man had walked on, past all the cottages of Brydain that were near enough and regular enough to consider themselves as part of the street. They grew more and more straggling towards the end, and finally were succeeded by very bare-looking fields, separated from the rough track along which he was walking by a low grey stone wall. A little later the fields and the track ended together, and the stone wall, taking a sharp turn, crossed the young man's path. There was in it a large, rough wooden gate; he opened it with a quick touch to its clumsy latch, and it swung back wide, leaving exposed the dreary stretch of moorland on which stood the grey stone house. Across this, from the gate, led a rough road—in reality only a bridle-path, widened by years and centuries of use into something approaching a carriage-road. It was undivided in any way from the moor until about half way between the gate and the house, where it was bordered on each side by trees—straggling, twisted pine-trees and larches, whose stems were completely bare of branches on the windward side. The young man strode along the road, and under the trees, towards the grey stone house, which seemed with nearness to grow gaunter and grimmer still.

The "Great House," as it was called in Brydain, must have been named from comparison alone, for, intrinsically, the name was inappropriate enough.

It was built round a very small inner



square, and it was in itself by no means large. The high walls were of smooth, squared stone, which had no ivy or creeping plants to soften its hard surface. The windows were few and very small; many of them still retained the lancet form which the builder of the house had probably found the best adapted for security from his enemies. They had been slightly altered on the side facing the dark hills, and widened; but even those which had been so treated still presented the idea rather of a necessary outlook for the dwellers within, than that of windows to admit sun and air.

On the side to which the approach edged by the wind-blown pines led up there were no windows at all. The cold grey façade was broken only by a heavy doorway, with stone mouldings, ending in a crest consisting of a lion's head.

The turret, which stood at the eastern corner, was pierced with several lancets in its upper storey. From the ground below they seemed only like darker slits in a grey ground; but in reality they commanded a wide view down the ravine, to the crest of the hills, and over the dreary moor. There was no garden; the house was bordered by a narrow strip of ground shut in by a wire fence. But the enclosure contained only a few stunted shrubs. On the southern side—that facing the moor—the enclosure was a little wider, and bore traces of what had apparently once been a few flower-beds; but they were bare and empty enough. There was no sign of any life about them, and their very outlines were indistinct and vague.

The young man passed under the last of the trees, reached the stone doorway, lifted the heavy twisted iron ring that served as a handle to the dark oak door, opened it, and entered, letting the door fall together behind him with a crash.

#### CHAPTER II.

THREE hours had passed since the young man had let himself in at the heavy stone doorway. It was past eight o'clock, and he was sitting by the fire in a room bright and warm with the dancing flames. The room was not inconsistent with the outer aspect of the house—that is to say, its furniture was not. It was sombre, and dark, and scanty. There was a square oak table in the middle of the room, with no cloth upon it, and its shining surface bore in places marks of long and rough use.

There was a smaller table which might have been a writing-table between two of the windows, and there were a few uncushioned oak chairs set against the walls. At the end opposite to the fireplace stood an enormous oak sideboard or dresser. It was so large, high, and altogether disproportionate to the wall against which it stood, that it gave the impression of having been put together where it stood; and such, indeed, was the case. It was darker even than the table, and carved at each corner of the curious canopy which formed its heading with the same lion's head that made the finials of the mouldings on the doorway. Its dark recesses seemed deeper and darker for two brilliantly polished silver tankards and a silver tray which shone conspicuously on one of its shelves.

There was neither carpet nor curtains in the room, and the windows were closed only with massive shutters. But in spite of its scanty furnishing, the room was by no means uncomfortable or cheerless. There was over all the sombre appointments an air of careful keeping and familiar use which would have made them look welcoming, and to a certain degree inviting, even to a stranger.

The firelight danced up and down the young man's figure, making it and his face even more distinct against the dark background than it had been in the cold light as he walked through Brydain village three hours earlier. Now that his face was free from the shelter of plaid or cap, all its points showed, and the beauty of his deep-set blue eyes and straight brows was decidedly added to by his firm, square chin and the heavy moustache that was golden-brown, like his hair.

He was leaning back in his chair, his feet on the hearthstone, and of his hands, one was behind his head, the other laid on his knee. They were curious hands, strong and tanned; they were evidently the hands of a man used to an athletic, outdoor life, but at the same time they were long and rather thin, and the fingers had a flexible unusual form that seemed, taken with their strength, to speak of a mixed and unusual nature in their owner. His blue eyes were unusual also. They were so deep-set as to be remarkable from that characteristic alone; and their blue was that deep, clear, yet not actually dark blue that is very seldom seen. The expression in them at the moment was dreamy and abstracted, and though they were fixed on the flames, it was very evident that the

young man saw none of their dancing light. This expression was indefinitely increased by a thin line that ran between them, across his forehead—a thin blue vein, at moments almost imperceptible, at others, as at this, curiously conspicuous through the bronzed skin.

About his whole figure, as he sat alone in the long bright room, there was the same inconsistent pathos that had so unconsciously influenced old Elspeth and the men in Brydain village.

The flames grew higher and higher and curled faster and faster round the great logs of wood; but the young man did not move nor alter his position in the least. The flames reached their height and began to sink a little, and to retreat from the charred wood like a fast-ebbing tide from the shore, while the wood itself began to glow a deep red. As if the alteration in the light of the room, made by their sinking, had unconsciously reached and affected the far-distant current of his thoughts, the young man stirred slightly, and as he stirred he sighed heavily, and his eyes wandered from the fire to rest wistfully on the empty chair with the worn old red cushion which stood opposite to him. As they rested there, their blue grew rather dim, and the young man raised one hand and brushed it across them hastily. Turning back to the fire, he kicked one of the great logs until a shower of sparks flew from its glowing mass up the chimney.

At this moment the door of the room, which was in the shadow of the great dresser, opened quickly. The pale yellow light of a candle streamed across the red glow, carried by a man, who walked up the room with hasty steps.

He was not to be described exactly as an old man, though his years were far past those of middle age. He stooped a little, and his walk lacked vigour, but his hair, though scanty, was not grey, and in the eyes that shone out of a thin, withered face, was all their share of keen intelligence. He wore black clothes, which, from their evident newness and stiffness, gave him an angular appearance.

"Maister Keith!" he exclaimed; "and why for have you no licht, when it's awaitin' you at your hand?"

He set down his candle as he spoke, and coming behind the young man's chair, took an unlighted lamp from a bracket by his side.

"I've not required a lamp, thank you, Mackenzie," answered the young man.

"And if you've not," was the instant

response, "that's no sayin' you'd not have been the better of one!"

He lighted the lamp, set it again on the bracket, and went out of the room, to return a moment later with a cloth over his arm. This he spread on the upper end of the table, and proceeded to set supper upon it. During this last process he fidgeted about the room far more than was necessary, and cast at the same time many looks at his silent young master. More than once he seemed to be about to speak, but each time his courage seemed to fail him, and to evaporate in an increase of energy directed towards the appointments of the table. Finally, he came up to the hearth and placed a log on the fire, bending over it and adjusting it to a nicety.

"Supper's ready," he said, laconically. Then, as if emboldened by accumulated effort: "If you'll no be finding me ower bold, Maister Keith—I ask your pardon—Brydain——"

"I'm in no hurry to be called Brydain," put in the young man in a low voice.

"I was going to ask you what you would be doing? You willna bide by your lane?"

"I've thought of many plans, Mackenzie, and I believe I have decided."

"You'll not decide to bide your lane—not at the first?" said Mackenzie. "You'll ask another to bide here with you for a bit? Couldna you ask any o' your London friends? And there's the young laird at Greystanes. You'll forgive my liberty, Brydain," he ended, breaking off suddenly, with a deprecating look on his face.

"It's not a liberty, Mackenzie," answered the young man. "You are, now"—the mist gathered again before the blue eyes, only to be instantly repressed—"you are my oldest friend; you have known me all my life, and it would be odd, indeed, if I did not tell you what I have decided. Come back after supper and I'll tell you all my plans."

Mackenzie, with a look of great satisfaction on his withered face, made a gesture that was half assent and half respect, and taking up his candle, went out of the room.

Twenty minutes later the young man rose from the table at which he had half mechanically taken his place on Mackenzie's departure and rang the bell. It was responded to by Mackenzie so quickly as to suggest the possibility of his having awaited it somewhere very near at hand.

"It's gay small the supper you'll have

eaten the nicht," he said, reproachfully, as he reached the table.

The young man, who had gone back to his chair by the fire, looked up absently.

"Supper! Oh, I'm not hungry, Mackenzie," he said, simply.

Mackenzie made no answer in words, but with a jerk of his head, proceeded to clear away the supper with great rapidity. When he had accomplished this, and given a polish to the table with a duster he produced from his coat-tail pocket, he shut the door and presented himself before his master by the fire.

"Yon lamp's flaring, Brydain," he said, abruptly. "It's ower likely. Even when they are well looked to, lamps gang an ill gait. They are of small use compared to candles."

The last discursive remarks were intended as a prelude to draw his master's attention to himself, and it was not wholly unnecessary, for the young man's thoughts seemed to have wandered as far as they had done before supper.

"You've come to talk to me, Mackenzie," he said, sitting up in his chair quickly. "Sit down, will you?"

With an instinct as quick as it was delicate, Mackenzie averted his face from the empty place with the red cushion, and drawing an ordinary chair from the table sat down in it, and waited for his master to speak.

"You want to know what I mean to do?" he said. His voice was rather low, and he spoke slowly. "Well, Mackenzie, it will surprise you to hear what it is, perhaps. I mean to go to London."

"To London!" echoed Mackenzie, apparently so taken aback that he could find no comment whatever.

"Yes," went on the young man; "I have decided to go to London, for a time, at all events."

"To London!" repeated Mackenzie again. But though the words were only repetition, there was a great difference this time in Mackenzie's tone. He spoke the few syllables with a voice full of horror, and he added nothing more.

"You remember," his master said, "my uncle Kingston?" Mackenzie's only answer being a nod, he went on without a pause. "I am going to write to him. He has a great deal of influence of various sorts, and I am sure he will help me to find something to do."

"And why are you for doing anything?" interrupted Mackenzie. "And what reason

should the Lairds of Brydain have for doing anything, save it were to look after their ain lands?"

"I don't know how all my ancestors have felt about it," said the young man, with a little smile. "Things are different, Mackenzie; or, perhaps, I am different. At any rate, I want to be doing something more."

"And couldna you be doing something more in Brydain, then, syne you're so set on it?" said Mackenzie, eagerly.

"There is not anything for me to do in Brydain, Mackenzie; you know that as well as I. I must be where other men are working."

"I dinna ken," said Mackenzie, "what good is like to come of working where there's so many afield before you."

The young man seemed to consider for a moment, then he said:

"This is how it is, Mackenzie, you see: I don't know a bit what I can do, or what I am good for. But I believe I can do something, and when I get among every one else, I should find out. Besides, I want to see the world."

Mackenzie, who had watched his master as he spoke with an anxiety and intentness which no shade of expression could escape, met the end of this statement with a sigh.

"To see the world, you say, Brydain. Are you considerin' what the meanin' o' your words may be?"

"I think I am, Mackenzie," said the young man, smiling again slightly. "I know what my meaning of them is."

"But yours isna the only one; there's many meanings to be thoct on." Mackenzie's voice, from being eager, had grown to be excited, and he leant forward as he spoke, and looked with keen intentness into his master's face.

"I've thought of all of them, Mackenzie," he answered; but he was not smiling now. Something from Mackenzie's eyes seemed to have communicated itself to his own expression.

The room was perfectly still; the wind outside had sunk suddenly, and the only sound was the cracking of the logs on the hearth. Mackenzie waited for a moment or so, and then, with a glance all round the room, as if to assure himself that no other presence was there, he said in a very low tone:

"There's ower many women in London; you canna hope to be as safe as in your ain place."

There was something in Mackenzie's

tone as he spoke—something in its strained and eager anxiety that showed plainly that all his former objections to Brydain's scheme had been mere fencing, and that these words alone contained the real one.

"Women? What if there are women in London, Mackenzie?" The young man spoke in a defiant tone; but the strange expression that his face had caught from Mackenzie's had not faded from it.

Mackenzie watched him for an instant. Strong emotion was working in every line of his withered old face, and a look of absolute dread shone from his sharp eyes. He leaned still further forward, and his face was close to the young, handsome face, as he said in a whisper:

"You'll no have forgotten the number, Brydain?"

His emotion or his words produced a curious result.

The young man sprang to his feet with such energy as to push his chair back nearly as far as the shuttered window behind; his face was aflame, his deep blue eyes flashing with excitement. He clenched his right hand fiercely.

"Forgotten!" he cried. "No, Mackenzie, I have not forgotten! There is small chance of my forgetting when the whole of Brydain, including yourself, seems to take a pleasure in reminding me of that old-world nonsense!"

Mackenzie, who had risen too, trembled visibly at the last words.

"You dare to call it such, Brydain," he said, in an awe-struck tone, "and your father not seven days dead?"

"I dare, and I shall!" was the instant answer. "It is partly to show you all what old-world nonsense it is that I am going to London. I am going to work and get on, and make it all visibly nonsense! Did you think I was going to sit down in the chimney-corner, and wait for it to come to me, Mackenzie?"

"I thought you would dree your weird in your ain place," was the answer.

"You are determined I shall dree it then, Mackenzie? Wait and see; only wait and see. These are days of facts, not fancies, and I am not going to be influenced in the least in thoughts, words, or actions, by a set of utterly undesigned coincidences!"

Brydain took a rapid turn down the room as he finished speaking. The light of the fire was so low, and that of the one

lamp so inadequate to the long room, that he passed into semi-darkness before he had taken three steps. Mackenzie stood quite still, trying to penetrate it with his short-sighted eyes, until Brydain emerged from it on the other side of the table, and came back into the little circle of light. Mackenzie took two uncertain steps towards him, and laid a hand, rough with work and cramped with rheumatism, on the stalwart young arm.

"Brydain," he said; "Brydain, I'd give my life to have you other than you are, for I've loved you like my ain ever syne you were the laddie I taught to ride; but gin it is so ordained, dinna bring fate nearer with pride."

"I am not bringing fate an inch nearer," was the quick response. "I am simply following the dictates of common sense instead of fossil tradition. You think it over, Mackenzie, and you'll see for yourself how right I am."

Mackenzie said no more; he took his hand away from his master's arm, and walked slowly down the room towards the door, while Brydain threw himself again into the large chair. Every faltering step was more uncertain than the last, and Mackenzie's face as he left the lamp-light was dejected beyond words. At the door, however, he suddenly turned, as if struck by a new idea.

"If you're set on ganging this dell's gait to London," he said, "you'll be requiring a caretaker here, I'm thinking?" In Mackenzie's voice, as well as his words, was a singular and characteristic mixture of foreboding and terror with thoughtfulness and practical foresight.

"Yes," answered Brydain, absently.

"There's the widow of my brother and her bairn wants the like place. She's a God-fearing, able body for an English-born, and the bairn is a handy lass. I'll be writing to them the morn."

"Do as you like," said his master, still more absently. "Write to them, certainly," he added, as Mackenzie went out. Brydain had sunk back again into the chair, with a sudden complete reaction in face and manner from the excitement with which he had moved and spoken just before. His face was fixed on the fire, and the expression it had caught from Mackenzie's had returned to it, intensified by the curious blue line, which at the moment showed very plainly on his brow.